

REMARKS

This Amendment, submitted in response to the non-final Office Action dated July 30, 2003, is believed to be fully responsive to the points of rejection raised therein. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration on the merits is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-8 and 11-19 are pending. Claims 9, 10 and 20-50 are cancelled above. Claims 1, 3, 4, 7, 8, 12, 15, 17 and have been amended. No new matter has been added by the amendments.

Claims 9, 10, 20 and 21 have been rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph. Amended Claim 1 includes the recitations of original Claims 9 and 10, and amended Claim 18 includes the recitations of original Claims 20 and 21. The amendments to these claims address the Examiner's concerns. As requested by the examiner, "layer" has been replaced with "material." No change in scope is intended by these amendments. Applicants respectfully submit that the claims satisfy the requirements of 35 USC 112, second paragraph.

Claims 1-5, 8, 18 and 19 have been rejected under 35 USC 102(b) over commonly assigned US Patent No. 5,463,225 (Kwasnick). Claims 1-5, 8, 9, 11, 18 and 19 have been rejected under 35 USC 102(e) over US Patent No. 6,348,693 (Weisfield). Claim 6 has been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) over Kwasnick or Weisfield, in view of US Patent No. 5,179,284 (Kingsley). Claim 7 has been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) over Kwasnick or Weisfield, in view of US Patent No. 6,278,118 (Homme). Claim 17 has been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) over Kwasnick or Weisfield, in view of US Patent No. 5,220,170 (Cox).

Claims 12-16 were found to be allowable if rewritten to include the limitations of the base and any independent claims. Claims 10 and 21 were found to be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejections under 35 USC 112, second paragraph.

Applicants respectfully submit the following remarks in support of the patentability of the claims.

1. Claims 1, 2, 5, 6 and 11

Claim 1 has been amended to include the additional recitations of original Claims 9 and 10 and to remove the recitation "substantially free from void spaces." As

noted above, Claim 10 was found to be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 1 is in condition for allowance. Further, as Claims 2, 5, 6 and 11 depend from Claim 1, these claims are also in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejections of Claims 1, 2, 5, 6 and 11 be withdrawn.

2. Claims 12-14

As noted above, Claims 12-14 were found to be allowable if rewritten to include the limitations of the base and any independent claims. Claim 12 has been rewritten in independent form, and Claims 13 and 14 depend from Claim 12. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 12-14 are in condition for allowance.

3. Claims 3, 4, 7, 8 and 15-17

As noted above, Claims 15 and 16 were found to be allowable if rewritten to include the limitations of the base and any independent claims. Claim 15 has been rewritten in independent form, and Claims 3, 4, 7, 8, 16 and 17 depend from Claim 15. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 3, 4, 7, 8 and 15-17 are in condition for allowance.

4. Claims 18 and 19

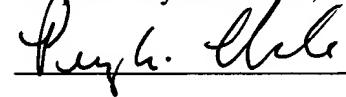
Claim 21 was found to be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejections under 35 USC 112, second paragraph. As discussed above, Claim 18 was amended to include the recitations of original Claims 19 and 20, including addressing the Examiner's concerns regarding 35 USC 112, second paragraph. Claim 18 was also amended to address the Examiner's concerns regarding double patenting. Claim 19 depends from Claim 18. In view of these amendments, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 18 and 19 are in condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that the application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of the application are respectfully requested.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further is needed to place the application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicants' undersigned representative at the telephone number below.

Respectfully submitted,



Penny A. Clarke
Reg. No. 46, 627

General Electric Company
Building K1, Room 3A72
Schenectady, New York 12301

Oct. 21, 2003

Telephone: (518) 387-5349